

Ordering the Right Fertilizers for Each Crop

FROM A GARDENING CORRESPONDENT

Gardeners are divided into two camps—organic and inorganic. The adherents of the former school eschew all manufactured fertilizers such as sulphate of ammonia, sulphate of potash and the rest, holding the view that plants nourished on such fabricated chemicals fail to provide the human race with the nutriment we need. This school puts its faith in natural manures, in compost, dried blood—anything, in fact, that has not undergone a factory process.

Let me hasten to add that I have an open mind on this subject. I await with some impatience the results of a carefully controlled experiment which will prove once and for all that we are better served by organic manure than by a combination of organic and inorganic fertilizers.

In the meantime we must grow plants in our gardens. We will, of course, dig in all the humus-forming material we can find—manure, compost, hop manure, bark fibre, peat, decayed leaf soil, and so on. Then we will give our soil the extra fillip that it requires to produce the crops we want to grow. This is where so many gardeners fall down. We give our seed or bulb order a good deal of thought. We make it out in good time and, if we have chosen wisely, all the seeds are at hand just when we want to sow them. But with fertilizers we are much more haphazard. Oh yes, we order a load of manure, or a sack or two of hop manure, and there our foresight ends. For the rest of the summer we pop into the local shop and

of all bonemeal. We need it to fork into the flower borders at say half-a-pound to the square yard, and we need it, too, for various pot plants that need repotting. Then we need a good general fertilizer to dress the ground for all our vegetable crops. I believe that the best all-round fertilizer for all crops is the John Innes Base Fertilizer, put on generously, say from four to eight ounces to the square yard. It is a trifle more expensive than other general fertilizers, but I am sure it is well worth the odd few shillings.

I have one complaint about fertilizer manufacturers. The chemists produced a wonderful product called aldrin, which destroys most of our soil pests, including wire worm, the worst of the lot. Long-sighted merchants mixed aldrin with a good general fertilizer, so that we can feed our plants and at the same time take care of our soil pests. But, so far, nobody has mixed aldrin with the John Innes Base Fertilizer, and I think this is a pity, because the John Innes base is a first class fertilizer.

FRUIT TREES

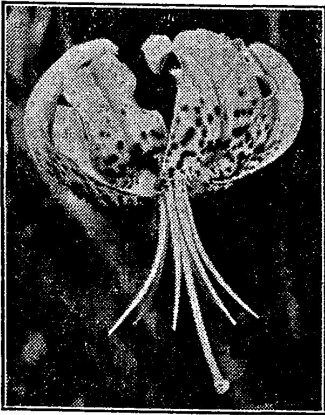
What else will we need besides a good general fertilizer? Sulphate of potash comes to mind first. We shall need it for our fruit trees, if they have shown any sign of potash deficiency, and the most usual sign is a brown edge to the leaves in mid-summer, and a premature leaf fall. A little sulphate of potash will be handy for the delphiniums, say an ounce to the square yard around the plants. This will stiffen up the stems and make them a little less liable to topple over at the first strong wind in July. Sulphate of potash is a great help, too, for the tomatoes.

Then sulphate of ammonia is useful all through the summer. The spring cabbages will look very poorly about the end of March, and half an ounce of sulphate of ammonia worked into each yard of row alongside the plants will work a miracle.

Lawns look starved and poorly after the winter. A good general fertilizer well watered in during April will stimulate the turf and give us a rich, dark green sward. Let us order all the fertilizers we may need for the whole season. If we order them in bulk they will be much cheaper. The carriage will be less and we will have the comfortable feeling that they are all in the shed ready for use when we want them.

BULBS FOR SUMMER

The appearance of the first crocuses, *Iris histrioides major* and *Scilla tubergeniana*, in our rock gardens reminds us that this is the time to be ordering more bulbs for flowering in the summer. Those who like to have something a little original and exotic for a flower arrangement will find good stocks at not extortionate prices of *Lilium speciosum rubrum*, and for something even more imposing, *Lilium auratum*, the queen of lilies. Anemones should be planted again at this time of the year, and if given a good rich soil where they will not dry out in baking sun, should flower well. The De Caen and St. Brigid strains contain a glorious mixture of colours, and there are named varieties for those who are more particular. Tuberous begonias, especially those of the multiflora type, are always valuable for tubs, stone vases, or for borders where they can be watered lavishly in dry weather, and gladioli are now an indispensable feature of the garden, but this is a large subject, so more of them another day.



The varieties of *Lilium speciosum* add distinction to the border and to a flower arrangement.

buy the odd half-pound of this or that when we think a particular crop needs it.

This year we should be a trifle more long-sighted. The petrol shortage will have a disastrous effect on the fertilizer position. The local shops will have difficulties in keeping up their stocks, and when we go in hopefully for a pound or two of our favourite fertilizer, we may find it is just not there. So, let us take a deep breath and order the whole season's requirements at one go. What do we really need? First

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